

POLICY BULLETIN CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS

NSLP 02-07

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SUBJECT: Meal Counting and Claiming

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As stated in the Child Nutrition Programs Administrative Manual and Regulations 7 CFR Part 210.7(c)(1) Lunch count system, the School Food Authority (SFA) shall correctly approve each child's eligibility for free and reduced price lunches, maintain a system to issue benefits and update eligibility, accurately reflect eligibility status and make eligibility changes in a timely manner.

An accurate meal count must be taken daily by category at the point of service 7 CFR Part 210.7(c)(2). The point of service is the determining point where a reimbursable free, reduced-price, or paid meal has been served to an eligible student (Supplementary Materials, Meal Counting and Claiming Manual, pg. 4).

After the eligibility determinations are made at the beginning of the school year (ten operating days from receipt of a new year application), increased benefits shall be made no later than three calendar days from the SFA's date when benefit changes were determined. A decrease in benefits shall be made within ten calendar days of SFA's decision of eligibility change.

Status changes brought about due to verification findings must be entered into the computer system before the meal service to be accurately reflected at the end of the day. Many computer systems are not time sensitive. If a student's status is changed in the computer system after the meal, the daily meal count by category will not match the point of service count. If a child's status is paid at the point of service count, it should be paid in the daily meal counts. The same should be the case for free and reduced price counts.

If alterations are made after the day end procedures (i.e., hand count sheets not entered or eligibility status changes) documentation of changes must be maintained.